GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:780
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2009
KILLING OF RHINOS
Hussain Shri Anwar

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Rhinos have been killed by poachers during the last two years at the Kaziranga National Park in Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Union Government has received any proposal from the State Government of Assam with regard to protection of Rhinos;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to protect the Rhinos?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY)

(a)&(b) Instances of poaching of rhinos have been reported from Kaziranga National Park during the last two years. As per the information received from the State Government, 18 rhinos were poached in 2007 and 6 in 2008 in Kaziranga National Park and adjacent areas in Assam. Lucrative price for rhino horns in clandestine international markets is the main motive behind the poaching of rhinos.

(c)&(d) During the financial year 2008-09, the Government of Assam had submitted an Annual Plan of Operation (APO) for an amount of Rs.1630.12 lakh for Kaziranga Tiger Reserve under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme - `Project Tiger`. Based on this proposal, the Central Government has approved an amount of Rs.457.4129 lakh to Kaziranga Tiger Reserve, of which Rs.150.00 lakh has been released so far.

(e) The steps taken by the Government to protect wildlife including rhinoceros,inter alia, include the following:

1. The Central Government has enacted the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to deal with the issues of wildlife conservation. Stringent penalties are imposed on the offenders for the contravention of the provisions of the Act.

2. Rhinoceros (Rhinoceros unicornis) is included in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby according it the highest degree of protection.

3. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, with a network of five Regional and three Sub Regional Offices, has been set up to control wildlife crime.

4. Financial and technical support is being provided under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes viz. − Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats, Project Tiger and Project Elephant to State/UT Governments for the conservation and protection of wildlife including rhinoceros and its habitats.

5. Intensive patrolling in sensitive areas is carried out in coordination with other law enforcement agencies for the conservation of rhinoceros.

6. Nature awareness campaigns for the public are conducted regularly.

7. Ecodevelopment activities are taken up in fringe villages of rhino habitats to solicit people`s participation in conservation.